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THE CHARACTER OF POPERY.

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POPERY is a *Catholick* Shamm; for it cheats those that temper with it of their Understandings, and their Senses, their Consciences, and their Souls. An Ecclesiastical Juggle; the cunning Knave's Mask, and the silly Bigot's Creed. *Jacob's* Ladder reversed, or the Devil's choice Entrance; which he doubts not, but if well oyl'd, will at last carry him to Heaven. For as a Project, that offers at saving Men, and their Sins together, may, in many Cases, to make their Sins meritorious of Salvation. A Blendure of *Mahomism* and *Christianism*, dress'd up in a long Mantle of *Hypocrisie*, call'd *Pure Popery Christ*; A false Bait, managed by a crafty sect of Fisher-men, that pretend to angle Souls for Heaven, but design only to catch Gudgeons, and grasp Earth, and its advantages, singling the Keys of PARADISE, on purpose to amuse the Croud, and to get Opportunities to pick their Pockets. 'Tis a strange Farrago of Errors and Imposfures: A Gallimawfrey, composed of contradictory Ingredients: The highest Superstitions, and yet the rankest Prophaneness: Subtilties of the finest spinning, and most gross Absurdities. It makes its God and then eats him. It teaches all its Votaries, to Pray, without either understanding the Words, or yet devout Attention of Mind. To Fast with a Luxurious Dinner of Fish, Wine, and Sweet-Meats, that *Heliogabalus*, and other choicest Heathen Gluttons would lick their Lips at. It cries up MARRIAGE for a Sacrament, and yet, at the same time, bars its Sacred Clergy from it, because it will defile them. It boasts its self to be the sole Keeper and Interpreter of the *Scriptures*, and yet avows, that they are corrupted, and unintelligible: And to, at once, proclaims her own perfidious Negligence, in not preserving the *Sacred Oracles*; and her monstrous Uncharitableness, in not giving Us an Authentick Explication. It pretends an Infallible Knack of deciding all Controversies, yet cruelly suffers her Brats to spend their Times in endless Quarrels; witness the Brawls between her *Franciscans* and her *Dominicans*, her *Jesuites* and her *Faculties*, her most *Christian*, and most *Catholick Doctors*.

We may therefore call it a *Rope of Sand*, held together meerly by *Interest* and *Force*. A *Babel*-Building, erected by diligent *Pride*, and aspiring *Pride*, upon the Plains of drowsie *Ignorance*, and easy *Credulity*, and cemented not only with the Tears, but the Blood of thousands of *Innocents*. A devouring MONSTER, begot in the dark by an incestuous Mixture of *Impudence* the Son, with *Ignorance* the Mother; Suckled by *PHOCAS*, with the Milk of REBELLION, and Blood-Royal; and Rocked to Sleep by *Pope BONIFACE*, in the Cradle of a *Universal Bishoprick*; where doting *MONKS* sung Lullabies to it, with a multitude of lying *Legends*, and feigned *Miracles*. The *French* Usurper, King *PEPIN*, and his Son, gave it a new Coat; and *Pope HILDERBRAND* taught it to go High-Lone, and trample on the NECKS of *EMPERORS* and *KINGS*. 'Twas always very fond of Babies to play with; and cryed and scrauch'd most filthily, till it had got Pictures and Images set up in *Churches*; which from Lay-men's Books, quickly became their GODS. The School-men provided it Battles of Distinction, and abundance of Elder POT-GUNS, to divert it self, and amuse the World with. The Conventicle of *TRENT* found it sick of the *Rickets*; but applying altogether the *Italian Physick*, set it again upon its Legs, though with a Head twell'd bigger than before. Yet ever since, it hath been languishing in a *Consumption*, to palliate which, Fifty Thousand Fathers of the Society, are always busy with *Cordials* and *Pills*, to keep up its Spirits and Complexion. The DIET it delights in, is *Human Fleshe*, and the *Blood of* MARTYRS: The *Inquisition* is its Right-Leg, and *Sophistry* its Left; and with these Two Supporters, it bestrides the World.

To express its Essence, and full Latitude in one word, you must call it *ANTI-CHRISTIANISM*, (whether you take [*Anti*] to signifie *against*, *for*, or *instead of*, as the *Greek* Tongue hath it; or whether you take [*CHRIST*] to denote peculiarly our Blessed *Saviour*; or more generally, his *Vicegerents*; or more largely, his *Saints* or *Catholick Church*; who all enjoy the Unction of the *Holy One*.) For as this *Mock-Religion* most impudently pretends its *POPE*, the greatest Rebel and Enemy to *GOD* and *CHRIST*, under Heaven) to be *Vice-God*, or *Christ's Vicar* or *Lieutenant* upon Earth; and that he has a Plenitude of Power in *Christ's* stead, to Rule the Universal Church. Under which forged Commission, and kind Sembleance, nothing can tend more against the Person, Honour, Merits, Offices, and whole *Gospel* of *CHRIST*, nothing be more derogatory to the just Rights, and Veneration due to Sovereign Earthly Princes; nor yet any thing be more pernicious to, or destructive of Sincere Christians, than his Tripple-Crown'd *TRAITOR's* Doctrines and Practises.

For *Popery*, by its Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, will have the Body of *Christ* to be without the Properties of a true Body; and consequently, taking away the Humane Nature, it denies the Person of our Mediator.

It Invades his Royal Office, by assuming his Incommunicable Titles, by undertaking to Rescind, and make void his LAWS; Absolving Man from his Duty to God, by Dispensations, and from the Penalty

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Facindi which Sin hath made his due, by Indulgence; so *Bellarmine* tell us, *That the Pope hath a Power to make* *Specatum* *Sin to be no Sin.* And the Council of *Lateran*, *That the Pope has all Power over all Powers, as well of* *non pecca-* *Heaven as of Earth.*
tum.

It Blasphemes the PRIESTLY Office of Christ, whereby at one Oblation of himself, he satisfied *Con. Lat.* for all Sin, *Heb.* 10. 12. 1 *Jo.* 1. 7. For as if the same was Insufficient, *Popery* appoints an innumerable *Sess.* 10. Company of Shaveling Priests, whose daily business is pretended to offer up *Christ* afresh, or a propitia- *supra omnes* tory Sacrifice for the Quick and the Dead, in their Wicked and Idolatrous Mass. It also undertakes to *potestates* Purge away Sin by other Medicines, besides his precious Blood. And sets up a Multitude of other *tam Cœli* MEDIATORS and INTERCESSORS. It opposes *Christ's* Prophetick Office, by adding a *quam Terræ.* multitude of Traditions and Inventions, as necessary to Salvation, to be received with the same Reverence as the *Word of God.*

It exalts it self above all that is called God in the World: For its *POPE* Crowns and Uncrowns Emperours with his Feet, and Treads upon them as one would do upon a *Viper*; Takes upon him to Depose *KINGS* and *PRINCES*, to give away their *KINGDOMS* to discharge Subjects of their Allegiance and Oaths; and to justifie their Rebellion against, or Assassinations of their *Soveraigns.*

To speak Truth, *POPERY* is the Debauchment of all RELIGION. For by Substituting it self under the Christian Name, it hath Subverted the innate Sense and Worship of the Deity, and maintains Tenets, and imposes Practises, which the wiser sort of Heathens always blush'd at; And at the same time, it hath suppressed, and depraved, and counterfeited Divine Revelation: So that, the Principles both of Natural and Revealed Religion being thus Corrupted. It makes its Proselytes but so much the more the Children of Wrath, than they were by Nature; for she hood-winks their Understandings, degenerates and sears their Consciences, and lays waste all Morality.

Her design is not the promoting of *Christ's* Interest, (for that is apparently prostituted) but the Securing and Agrandizing of a Faction, which under the Profession of Christianity, might be false to all its Realities. Her Rule is the Corrupt Inclination of depraved Nature, to which they have throughly Conformed their Practical Divinity; which easeth Men of Duty, for which they have an Aversion, and clears the way to those Sins to which they are disposed, as though there were no need to avoid them. Thus their Principles are more pernicious, because more taking; because Men will quickly like that Religion, because he Loves his Sins; and will soon be feared, follow both, though he Perish for it Eternally.

So hath by Various Methods destroy'd (as much as in her lyes) the Credibility of the Christian Religion: As

First, By making Men to neglect and slight those Sacred Oracles, which contains such Demonstrations of its Verity; and to rely upon the vain Sandy pretence of her Infallibility, for the certainty of Faith.

Secondly, By obtruding upon the World her *Fabulous Legends*, and *lying Miracles*, in which she is so Notorious a Talker, which to every Rational Man appear to have been only Delusions, and Rank Imposures.

St. Austin. *Figmenta mendacium aut portenda fallaciam Spiritum.*

Thirdly, By rendring the Gospel it self unworthy all Acceptation; as she hath abolish'd, and depraved it, through her absurd, superadded Principles, Idolatrous Worship, Gross Superstitious Rites, and innumerable Ceremonies, no less various in themselves, than Burdensome to the Observers.

Fourthly, By reducing our whole Duty (upon the Matter) to certain unreasonable, Servile Submissions, to her Haughty, Avaritious Clergy. And by resolving the Terms of Eternal Happiness finally, into the Benediction, or good Pleasure of her vile Fulsome Priests.

So that take her Systeme together, and I see not how either *Jew*, *Pagan*, *Turk*, or other *Infidel*, can Honestly entertain the Christian Religion, as she Teacheth it; or if they should so Embrace it, how far they would be Gainers by the Bargain.

In the *Homilies of the Church of England* for Whitsunday, you have this Character given of her: *That the Church of Rome is an Idolatrous Church, not only an Harlot, as they Scripture calls her, but also a Foul, Filthy, Old, Withered Harlot, and the Mother of Whoredoms, Guilty of the same Idolatry, and worse than was among the Gentiles.*

POPERY in its self, is the vilest Tyranny, that ever Heaven in Judgment suffered, or Earth in Patience groan'd under: That of *Dionysius* and *Nero* were but Flea-bitings to it; They only Challenged a Despotical Power over Peoples Persons. This assumes an uncontroulable Dominion over their very Consciences and Souls: And is framed intirely for the Befooling, Enslaving, Despoiling, and Corrupting of the Laiety, and the Enriching and Agrandizing her Priesthood; who with the Supple Hams of a Flattering Hypocrite, first Seem to Adore and Deifie; but as soon as they have gained their point, do really Spurn at, and Trample upon all Secular Dignity and Authority; for She assumes an Arbitrary Power to pluck up, and Destroy all Governments, when it is for her purpose.

But still, a finer Convenience or Umbrage of Religion she is, to those who will live by the Rules of none; And an admirable Colour for Ambitious Princes to enlarge their Empire, to the prejudice of their Neighbours, and pretence of advancing the Catholick Faith; and to destroy their own People for *God's* sake, when ever they shall have Oppressed them so far as to fear them. And as ready an Engine to excite Subjects to Rebellion against their Lawful Soveraigns, as oft as they will not Dance to the Measures of the Vatican.

To Conclude; As every Religion consists of Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline; so the Doctrine of *Popery* is Ignorance and Error. Its Worship, Idolatry and Superstition; Its Discipline, Rage and Cruelty. Whence fitly doth the Holy Spirit, in Sacred Writ, describe her by those three Titles, *The False Prophet*, *The Whore*, and *The Beast*; *False Prophet*, for her Teaching, and enforcing Errors; *Whore*, for her Idolatry, Gaudy Dress, and Meritricious Paintings: And *Beast*, for her Ravenous and Savage Cruelty.

To Conclude further; She is the Disgrace, and grand Impediment of the Gospel; the overthrow of Morals, the perpetual Disquieter of Civil States, the Destroyer of Christians, the Scandal of Infidels, and the Pest of the World. Which therefore, all Mankind are obliged, both in Honour, Conscience, and Interest, by all Lawful ways to oppose; and With, and heartily Pray, for its Extirpation from the Face of the *Earth*; which for the Comfort of all that suffer by, and under it, and to the Terror of all its Abettors, (notwithstanding their Subtilties, or Violence, to support what Providence has doomed for Destruction) shall assuredly, in *God's* due time, be accomplished, and the *KINGS* of the *Earth* shall Burn her with Fire. *Amen.*

FINIS.